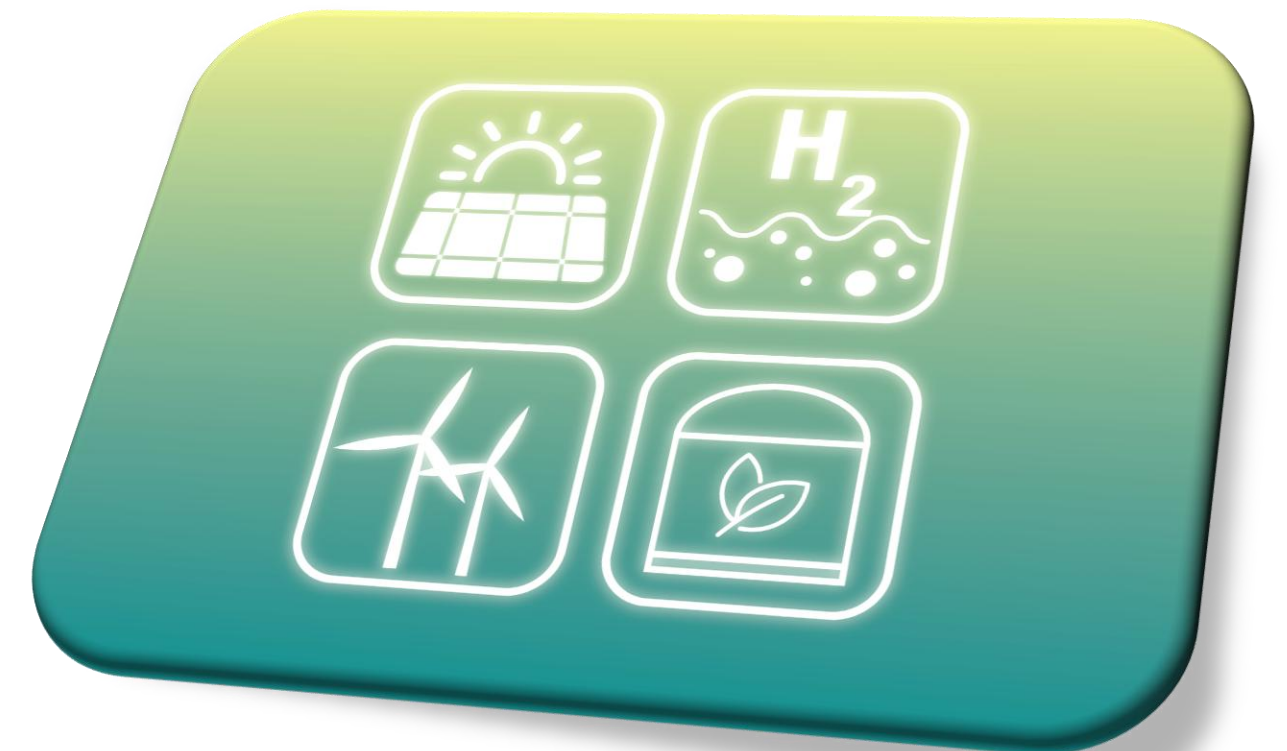


Unlocking SME Energy Potential

Challenges of a Slovenian Contact Point – Boosting SME Support on the Advisory Side



Online

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Local energy agency Spodnje Podravje

Mission: to boost sustainable energy development in the region

- Member of consortium of local energy agencies = role in supporting the state in energy legislation, subsidies and grants for energy sustainability

Main activities:

- EU and national projects
 - Energy managers for Municipalities in Spodnje Podravje Region
 - Local energy concepts + SECAPs, ECAPs
 - Energy audits and energy certificates
 - Designing, supervision of implementation of EE and RES Projects
 - Training activities for schools, mayors, managers, etc.
-
- **Operating RES contact point** for the Spodnje Podravje region (5 experts from LEASP)

Background – What Are RES Contact Points?

- Implemented in response to Directive 2018/2011
- Designed as **One-Stop-Shops** to support RES investors (including SMEs)
- In Slovenia: 34 contact points, coordinated by Borzen and supported by the Ministry of Infrastructure

Article 16

Organisation and duration of the permit-granting process

1. Member States shall set up or designate one or more contact points. Those contact points shall, upon request by the applicant, guide through and facilitate the entire administrative permit application and granting process. The applicant shall not be required to contact more than one contact point for the entire process. The permit-granting process shall cover the relevant administrative permits to build, repower and operate plants for the production of energy from renewable sources and assets necessary for their connection to the grid. The permit-granting process shall comprise all procedures from the acknowledgment of the receipt of the application to the transmission of the outcome of the procedure referred to in paragraph 2.

What is the goal of the contact point?

- to promote and facilitate the adoption of renewable energy by providing comprehensive support to investors in renewable energy projects
 - 🎯 more investments and implementation of RES
 - 🎯 greater investor confidence in the renewable energy sector
 - 🎯 more transparent and predictable regulatory environment
- **For SMEs**
 - 👍 All information in one place = easier access to subsidies available
 - 👍 Simplifying (supporting) the administrative burden (obtaining permits, subsidies, etc.)
 - 👍 Reducing the time required for project approvals
 - 👍 Ensuring access to the necessary information and resources to invest in renewable energy

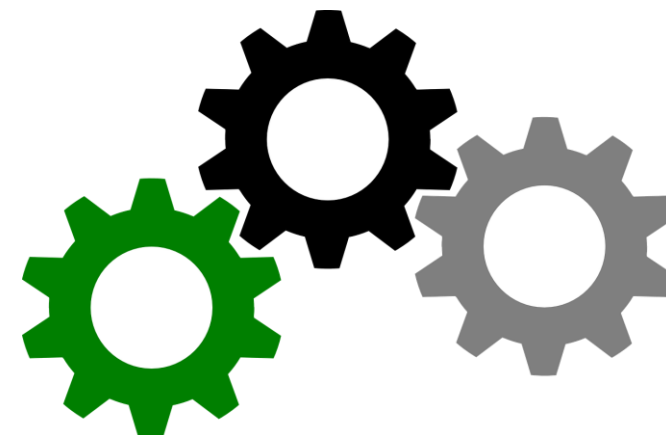
Our Role in Spodnje Podravje

- Operated by LEA Spodnje Podravje – 2 KT
 - In Ptuj – start in June 2024
 - In Podlehnik – start in June 2025
 - Plan: additional KT in Ormož (Autum 2025)
- Provided 47 counselling sessions in the first year
- Staffed by 5 expert advisors



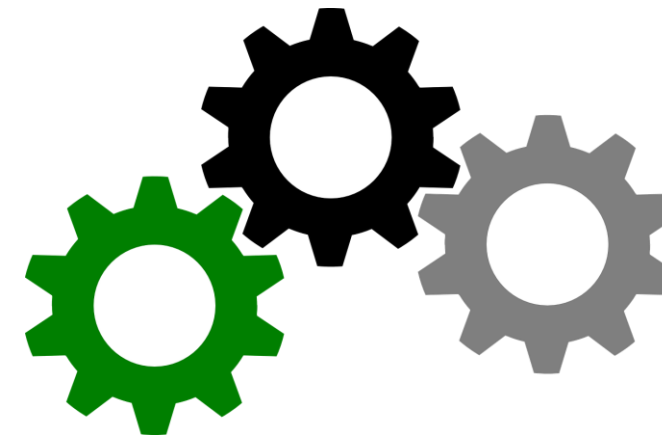
Main Challenges in SME Support (Advisory Side)

- ⚠ **Low Awareness Among SMEs** about contact point services
- ⚠ **Complex Bureaucracy** despite advisory support
- ⚠ **Lack of Tailored Information** for diverse SME sectors
- ⚠ **Insufficient Follow-Up** after first advisory session
- ⚠ **Resource Limitations** – human, financial, and time



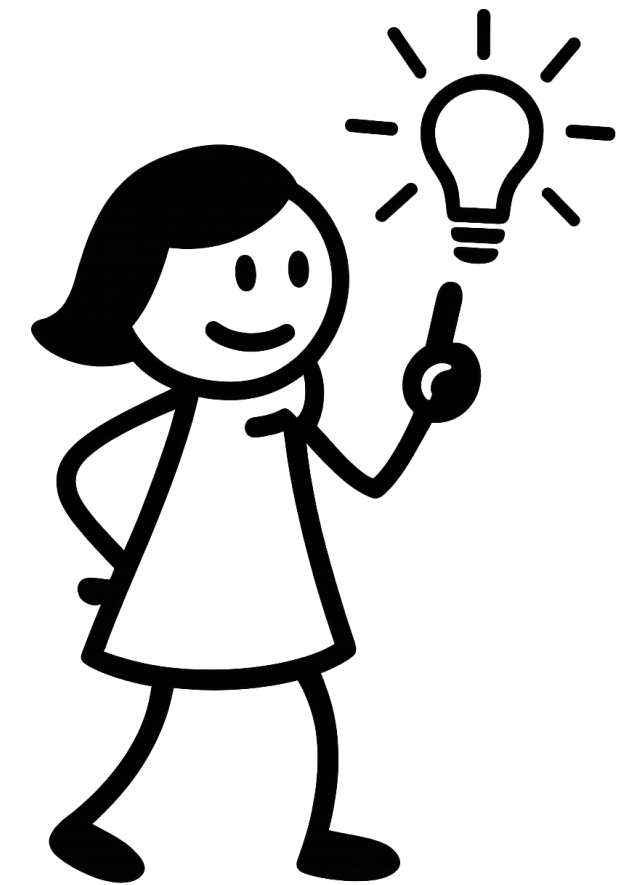
Institutional & Structural Challenges

- ⚠️ Fragmented communication between national and local stakeholders
- ⚠️ Slow administrative response from permitting bodies
- ⚠️ Inconsistent messaging on available subsidies and changes in rules
- ⚠️ Digital platform still under development or not SME-friendly



What SMEs Say They Need?

- One contact person for end-to-end support
- Examples of successful projects in similar industries
- Better explanation of technical/financial requirements
- Help with preparing documentation (permits, grant applications)
- Confidence in long-term policy stability



Boosting SME Support – What Can Be Done?

- ✓ **Strengthen Promotion & Outreach** (targeted campaigns by sector)
- ✓ **Develop Industry-Specific Guidance** (e.g., food processing, tourism)
- ✓ **Ensure Regular Follow-Up** with interested SMEs
- ✓ **Improve Coordination** with permit-issuing authorities
- ✓ **Offer Online & On-Site Support** – hybrid advisory options
- ✓ **Digital Tools:** pre-check tools, calculators, checklists

Key Takeaways

- ! RES Contact Points are a crucial support mechanism for SMEs
- ! Advisory services are effective but need to evolve
- ! Better targeting, digitalization, and integration are essential
- ! Investing in people (experts), tools, and partnerships pays off



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Our institution: Local energy agency Spodnje Podravje



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